

FROM AUGUS SAUSAGE

204 Hamilton Road
Glasgow G32 9QU

26th August 90

The Editor
New Statesman & Society
Foundation House
Perseverance Works
38 Kingsland Road
London E2 8DQ.

Dear sir

It is not entirely unexpected that the first people to rush into print attacking the excellent article of J. Kelman that appeared in the New Statesman & Society, dealing with Glasgow's year of culture, should be a trio of officials who have a vested interest in its outcome.

I am referring to Mr J. Spalding Director of Museums and Mr R Palmer Director of Glasgow 1990 festival Office along with his deputy Director Mr N. Wallace. All of these gentlemen took the time to reply to J. Kelman's letter. What amazes me is they did not include a contribution from Mr D. Clelland the founder of the exhibition first called the Words and the Stones but now called Glasgow's Glasgow which is on course to lose nearly £4 million. The attendance figures quoted by Mr Palmer do not tell us that the entrance charges have been slashed from £4 to £1 and that they are now busing in school children and pensioners to boost the attendances.

The letter from the above gentlemen reads like a brochure from Saatchi and Saatchi which it may be, but the facts are that Glasgow's year as City of Culture has dismally failed to give any prominence to Glasgow's proud socialist and radical past. It has even omitted or played down any reference to Burns or McDairmid's association or ties with Glasgow. How can a labour controlled council host a year of culture and keep an internationally known social history museum like the Peoples Palace in the background. Despite the fact that in the early discussions it had a major role to play, it has been kept in the background so well that even a private detective would have a great deal of difficulty finding any mention of it in any of the glossy brochures. All this long before the shameful treatment of Elspeth King the curator of the Peoples Palace took place. In contrast Mr Mark O'Neil the newly appointed curator of social history in Glasgow acquired an international reputation overnight despite the fact that his only previous post was keeper at Glasgow's smallest but wealthiest in Springburn.

One of the questions that many people are asking in Glasgow how the import of mega stars like Pavarotti and Sinatra enhance Glasgow's cultural image and how when Glasgow is awash with singers and musicians of all kinds we need to import buskers from the continent. It is to be expected that the professional carpet baggers who follow most festivals fail to understand what motivates writers like Kelman. When the year of culture draws to its close they will look to another gravy train and move on, already kites have been flown in the direction of Edinburgh and Dublin. Thankfully it will not be the festival office or Mr Palmer who will inform the people of Glasgow of the final cost of the year of Culture as he finds difficulty at the present time to give the full cost of his own office and his many staff which is a matter of growing concern.

The real tragedy of Glasgow's year of culture is the isolation of the thousands of people in the schemes like Easterhouse, Castlemilk and Drumchapel it has passed them by. When the most important letter most of them get through the doors is their Giro of what relevance is the year of culture.

yours fraternally



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Date 17th April 1991.

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Dear Harry, David

1990 - GLASGOW, CULTURAL CAPITAL OF EUROPE.

Thank you for your recent letter regarding 1990 when Glasgow was Cultural Capital of Europe.

For Glasgow, 1990 offered a marvellous opportunity as a showcase to the world. We hope that had the same effect as the great Empire exhibitions before the war - to emphasise the standing of Glasgow as the most important city in Scotland, and to promote it as one of the major commercial and artistic centres in Europe. The success of our cultural programme in 1990, we believe, proved Glasgow to be of the same standing as Paris, West Berlin, Amsterdam, Florence and Athens, all former cultural capitals of Europe. At the same time, we hope we were able to continue to establish our name as a leading European manufacturing and services centre, on a par with Munich, Milan or Barcelona.

Our International Garden Festival in 1988 can be seen as a curtain raiser which itself had 4.5 million visitors, many from other parts of the UK and overseas. However, the Garden Festival was a single (if enormous!) attraction; in contrast, in 1990 there were literally thousands of attractions for all kinds of people.

The Cultural Capital of Europe year complemented our other industrial and commercial promotions activities. These have been a key policy of the Council for some years, as we have fought to regenerate the economy and create new jobs. As the old heavy industries such as shipbuilding and iron and steel have declined, these new jobs are likely to be predominantly in service industries such as finance, administration and tourism.

You will probably have noticed that Glasgow was the first Cultural Capital of Europe to use the title in a progressive, indeed aggressive manner. The earlier Cultural Capitals traded on their existing merits - in Glasgow we are building our reputation.

Many people ask me about the funds which are being devoted to the 1990 events. In doing so, they are also concerned about Glasgow's long-standing social and economic problems. The biggest problem faced by this Council is housing, and we are constantly aware of the need to maximise the resources available for the benefit of council house tenants. However, there are strict government regulations prohibiting us from spending our own money to subsidise housing services, and which severely limit the amount which we can borrow to fund improvements or new building. These restrictions mean that even if the Council did not spend one single penny on 1990's cultural events, we could not spend one penny more on housing.

As it is, the overall budget for 1990 was currently in the region of £41.5 million. Of this, Glasgow District Council contributed £25 million, Strathclyde Region £16 million and the Government's Office of Arts and Libraries £500,000.

You may be interested to know about the Government's contribution - or lack of it - to 1990. When the then Arts Minister, Richard Luce, announced Glasgow as Cultural Capital of Europe, he stated that no extra money could be made available by the Government. However, Mr. Luce's department afterwards revised its position, and made the contribution of £500,000 which I mention above. What is quite incredible is that although this UK government department changed its mind, the Scottish Office did not.

On several occasions we appealed to the Secretary of State for extra funds, and we would have hoped that he would have taken a similar line to his UK colleague. However, this has not happened, and we can only conclude that he has failed to appreciate the importance of 1990 to Scotland as well as to Glasgow. Considering that the national governments of the earlier of Cultural Capitals have made enormous financial contributions, this omission is all the more regrettable.

In particular, we would have welcomed a contribution to the costs of marketing and promotion on a worldwide basis. We believe that as the local authorities contributed so much, it would have been reasonable to expect the Government to find about £2 million for this purpose. We gained a great deal of public and media support for this request, but we have not been successful in moving the Secretary of State.

The old Glasgow Corporation was involved in promotion of the arts over forty years ago, and this has been developed and continued by ourselves (as the successor council) and by Strathclyde Region. As a result, years before the idea of Cultural Capital Europe had been invented by the European Community, the local authorities were subsidising a wide range of arts activities. This was not only a way of creating jobs, but also of providing a boost to the quality of life for Glaswegians. As far as the Council is concerned, the old argument about art for art's sake is just not relevant. We believe that investment in a strong arts sector has a triple benefit.

We believe that a broad - based and vibrant cultural life is a real and lasting benefit to the population as a whole. This does not mean just the ballet, the opera and classical music, or even the Burrell Collection, although these are certainly important. It also means local community organisations developing their own projects and providing entertainment and artistic events for their own people. Culture is, in its broadest sense, what people do and how they do it. For this reason we are encouraged a wide range of small local groups to participate in 1990, in neighbourhood projects, in local history projects, in children's events and many others.

The second reason is that of direct employment. We now know that some 14,000 people in Glasgow owe their employment to current arts activities in the city.

The third benefit is less immediate, but more forward - looking. This is the long-term employment and commercial potential. The great Canadian economist, J.K. Galbraith, makes a very good point in this respect. In a lecture at the National Theatre in London a few years ago, he pointed to the example of the economy of Italy, which has enjoyed sustained consistently high rates of growth, despite unstable governments and chaotic industrial relations. His explanation for Italy's economic success was high quality design skills and flair for applying artistic excellence to industry.

For example, if any British car manufacturer brought out a new model, it would be given an Italian - sounding name (Vauxhall Nova, Ford Capri, Austin Allegro etc.) Similarly, all clothes shops are full of fashions for both men and women which bear Italian names, even if they come from Hong Kong or Leeds. The moral of these examples is that the reputation of Italian design is so high, that manufacturers the world over try to convince the public that their products are as good by borrowing an Italian name.

Italy could not have achieved this reputation without a strong artistic and cultural base, and an environment which encourages young people in particular to develop their talents. In Glasgow I believe that we have a now established the foundations for such an environment, in fields such as the visual arts (especially the "New Glasgow School" of painters), the theatre (with playwrights and performers such as Tom McGrath, Peter Arnott, Robbie Coltrane and Tony Roper), fashion (the new Glasgow style, featuring people like Lex MacFadyen), cinema, television and video (Bill Forsyth, BBC Scotland drama, STV, independent production companies etc.), and literature (Liz Lochhead, James Kelman, Alistair Gray, William MacIlvanney etc.)

I hope that this reply is of use to you, and that you are successful in your studies. Thank you once again for having written and shown such interest in 1990: I also hope that you had the chance to enjoy some of the events of Glasgow's Cultural Capital year.

Yours sincerely,

Pat Lally P.A.R.

P.P. PAT LALLY.

~~11/27/2017~~

DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS & VENUES

Your Ref:
Our Ref: RP/JRM/4761
If telephoning ask for:
Direct line: 227 5563

Dear Mr Kelman

As part of that publication, Glasgow City Council's Department of Performing Arts invites you to contribute your own brief personal comment on 1990, concentrating on the year as a whole, or on one particular aspect of the programme. Your contribution should be a maximum of 75 words in length, and may be less. To meet our tight publication schedule, it will need to be submitted by Wednesday 6 November.

If time constraints or other commitments prevent you from making a contribution, I would be grateful if you could advise Dominic d'Angelo on 041 227 5563 as soon as possible.



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Director of Performing Arts

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